

POSSIBLE CHANGES TO REGULATIONS FOR BLACK DRUM

The department would like to reopen its historical commercial black drum fishery within the Chesapeake Bay at levels commensurate with other south Atlantic states.

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) approved Addendum 1 to the Black Drum Interstate Fishery Management Plan which allows Maryland to reopen its black drum commercial fishery in the Chesapeake Bay. Currently, the commercial harvest of black drum is prohibited in Chesapeake Bay which is the most conservative management among the south Atlantic states. Maryland is requesting to re-open the Chesapeake Bay fishery with a 28 inch minimum size and a limit of up to 10 fish per vessel per day. The minimum size ensures that harvested black drum will be sexually mature and will have had the opportunity to spawn. The vessel limit will equate to a maximum weight of approximately 500 pounds per vessel per day which is equivalent to other south Atlantic states. This proposal is justifiable now because the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has classified the black drum stock as healthy and this limited Maryland harvest would have limited impact on coastwide harvest.